c.) Amendments to the Claims.

Please amend claims 1, 23 and 30 as follows, without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof.

1. (currently amended) A method for designing a fluid dynamic bearing system, comprising:

determining a first stability ratio for a first journal bearing configuration having at least two sub-journal bearings;

determining a second stability ratio for a second journal bearing configuration having at least three sub-journal bearings, wherein each of the at least three sub-journal bearings provide radial stiffness; and

implementing the second journal bearing configuration to improve ~~where~~ the second stability ratio ~~is improved~~ relative to the first stability ratio.

2. (canceled).

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein each sub-journal bearing of the first configuration has a length equal to substantially one-half of a total journal length and each sub-journal bearing of the second journal configuration has a length equal to substantially one-third of the total journal length.

4. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of determining a third stability ratio of a third journal bearing configuration.

5. (canceled).

6. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein the first configuration comprises two sub-journal bearings, the second configuration comprises three sub-journal bearings, and the third configuration comprises four sub-journal bearings.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein each sub-journal bearing of the first configuration

has a length equal to substantially one-half of a total journal length, each sub-journal bearing of the second journal configuration has a length equal to substantially one-third of the total journal length, and each sub-journal bearing of the third journal configuration has a length equal to substantially one-fourth of the total journal length.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the first configuration comprises 2+N number of sub-journals and the second configuration comprises 3+N number of sub-journals.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of: determining a third stability ratio of a third journal bearing configuration, the third configuration comprising 4+N number of sub-journals.

10-21. (canceled).

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the second stability ratio is greater than the first stability ratio.

23. (currently amended) A method for designing a fluid dynamic bearing system, comprising:

determining a first stability ratio for a first journal bearing configuration having at least two sub-journal bearings;

determining a second stability ratio for a second journal bearing configuration having at least three sub-journal bearings, wherein each of the at least three sub-journal bearings provide radial stiffness; and

implementing the second journal bearing configuration so that ~~where~~ the second stability ratio is greater than the first stability ratio.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 23, wherein each sub-journal bearing of the first configuration has a length equal to substantially one-half of a total journal length and each sub-journal bearing of the second journal configuration has a length equal to substantially one-third

of the total journal length.

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of determining a third stability ratio of a third journal bearing configuration.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the first configuration comprises two sub-journal bearings, the second configuration comprises three sub-journal bearings, and the third configuration comprises four sub-journal bearings.

27. (previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein each sub-journal bearing of the first configuration has a length equal to substantially one-half of a total journal length, each sub-journal bearing of the second journal configuration has a length equal to substantially one-third of the total journal length, and each sub-journal bearing of the third journal configuration has a length equal to substantially one-fourth of the total journal length.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the first configuration comprises 2+N number of sub-journals and the second configuration comprises 3+N number of sub-journals.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, further comprising the steps of: determining a third stability ratio of a third journal bearing configuration, the third configuration comprising 4+N number of sub-journals.

30. (currently amended) A method for designing a fluid dynamic bearing system, comprising:

determining a first stability ratio for a first journal bearing configuration having at least two sub-journal bearings;

determining a second stability ratio for a second journal bearing configuration having at least three sub-journal bearings, wherein each of the at least three sub-journal bearings provide radial stiffness;

determining a third stability ratio for a third journal bearing configuration; and

implementing the second journal bearing configuration to improve ~~where~~ the second stability ratio ~~is improved~~ relative to the first and third stability ratios.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, wherein each sub-journal bearing of the first configuration has a length equal to substantially one-half of a total journal length, each sub-journal bearing of the second journal configuration has a length equal to substantially one-third of the total journal length, and each sub-journal bearing of the third journal configuration has a length equal to substantially one-fourth of the total journal length.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the first configuration comprises 2+N number of sub-journals and the second configuration comprises 3+N number of sub-journals.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 32, further comprising the steps of: determining a third stability ratio of a third journal bearing configuration, the third configuration comprising 4+N number of sub-journals.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the second stability ratio is greater than the first stability ratio.